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Barron County Receives Grant to Help Troubled Youth

Health and Human Services a \$238,684 grant to improve substance abuse treatment and other services for young people in trouble with the law. In each of the four years following start-up, Barron County will be eligible to apply for up to \$250,000 for implementation.

The foundation awarded a total of \$2.59 million to 11 communities nationwide to develop treatment plans and other services for delinquent youth. There were 280 applicants competing for the grants.

Barron County's project, Reclaiming Our Future, will serve up to 500 young people with substance abuse problems each year beginning in 2003. "The need for Reclaiming Our Future is clear," said Chief Judge Edward R. Brunner, Barron County Circuit Court. "We know that kids who abuse alcohol and drugs are more likely to behave violently, break the law, or end up in court. We also know that alcohol and drug abuse is a major health problem among juvenile offenders in Barron County today." This is the first time the foundation has involved the judicial branch, and developers of Reclaiming Our Future said that judicial leadership would

Substance Abuse and Delinquency in Barron County

- A 1998-2000 survey found that 81 percent of students in grades six through 12 experiment with, or use, alcohol. Twenty-seven percent of 10th graders reported using marijuana one or more times.
- More than 50 percent of the 419 referrals by local juvenile justice officials to the Barron County Department of Health and Human Services involved alcohol and drug abuse in the year 2000.
- Barron County municipal courts issued more than 500 underage drinking citations in 2000.

Substance Abuse and Delinquency in the United States

- Nine out of 10 kids who need treatment for substance abuse are not getting it, according to the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse.
- Sixty-three percent of young people in U.S. juvenile corrections facilities receive no treatment for substance abuse.
- Between 60 and 80 percent of the nearly two million kids entering the justice system each year have

play a critical part in these efforts. Up to two local judges in each of the 11 communities that received grants will participate in a two-year fellowship.

An estimated 44 percent of referrals for adolescent treatment come from the juvenile justice system, yet minimal coordination exists between most courts and community service providers. Reclaiming Our Future will be a collaborative community project, relying on the voluntary participation of peers, parents, senior citizens, teachers, and more. The "network of community care" approach redirects the efforts of multiple entities toward common goals, involves families as partners in the work of reclaiming the child, and motivates service providers to innovate.

Over the next five years, Barron County plans to expand substance abuse treatment services for young people, improve access to existing and future services, and encourage local agencies to adopt common referral, screening, and assessment tools.

Involvement of the schools is a key component. Case managers will be assigned to each juvenile with the ultimate goal being to reduce delinquency. Each school district in the county will be actively involved in the program; one example of involvement might be offering classes such as woodworking to give the juveniles a new direction.

For more information on Reclaiming Our Future, contact Brunner at (715) 537-5691 or Mac Prichard, Reclaiming Futures communications director, at (503) 725-8921 or e-mail at macp@pds.edu. You can also visit their Web site to find out more: www.reclaimingfutures.org.

a substance abuse problem.

- Over the past 10 years, the incarceration rate for youth between ages 10 and 18 because of drug involvement has increased 291 percent. This increased rate of incarceration is five times higher for black youth than for white.
- Allowing one youth to leave high school for a life of crime and drug abuse costs society between \$1.7 and \$2.3 million. Putting a young offender in jail costs about \$40,000 annually, while drug treatment costs between \$3,000 and \$12,500 a year.

This information was excerpted from the 1999 Household Alcohol and Drug Abuse Survey from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The full report can be viewed online at: www.drugabusestatistics.samhsa.gov/

__ VIOS Celebrates 30 Years

Outagamie County's Volunteers in Offender Services (VIOS), which literally wrote the book on involving volunteers to enhance and expand the services that the courts and corrections system are able to offer, turns 30 this year. The group marked the occasion with an April banquet in Appleton that featured Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson as keynote speaker.

In the audience was Judge Nick F. Schaefer, who first learned about using volunteers in the courts from a Michigan judge in 1962. In 1972, Schaefer, who served on the bench in Outagamie County from 1968-87 and is now a reserve

judge, spearheaded an effort to match volunteer mentors with people convicted of first-offense misdemeanors. The program was called Volunteers in Probation. Two years later, Schaefer worked with Judge Gordon Myse (now a reserve judge) and John Feavel of the Bureau of Community Corrections to initiate a similar program for Huber Law inmates in Outagamie County. In 1985, the two programs merged and became VIOS.

VIOS volunteers now work on a variety of initiatives. They continue to mentor jail inmates and people on probation but also perform such diverse tasks as organizing books in the jail library and running a parenting class for incarcerated fathers.

Contact VIOS at (920) 832-5248 for more information or to order a copy of its new Volunteer Handbook, which provides job descriptions, profiles of probationers and inmates, expectations of volunteers, and much more. .

Victim Impact Panel Hosts Guests

Outagamie County's Victim Impact Panel (VIP), which brings people convicted of drunk driving face-to-face with victims and families affected by drunk driving, hosted three special guests at its April 9 meeting. Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson joined Judge Raymond S. Huber, Waupaca County Circuit Court, and Judge Donald A. Poppy, Calumet County Circuit Court, to observe the proceedings.

Abrahamson was interested in observing this form of restorative justice during her stay in Appleton for the Supreme Courts Justice on Wheels trip. Huber and Poppy are considering starting victim impact panels in their own counties and wanted to see firsthand how they operate.

The Outagamie County VIP began in 1996 with the leadership of Judge John Des Jardins. All second-offense drunk drivers are ordered to attend a panel, which lasts about one hour. Here, victims share their stories of pain and loss in an effort to reach the audience on an emotional level. According to observers, the experience is also therapeutic for the panel members.

Victim impact panels began appearing around the nation in the early 1990s. Many have been started by individuals looking for tools besides education and stiffer penalties to address repeat drunk driving.

According to a study conducted by researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, the panels work. Studying recidivism rates, the researchers found that 14.7 percent of offenders who attended a victim impact panel committed another drunk driving offense compared with 36.4 percent who did not attend.

Volunteers in Offender Services and the Upper Fox Valley Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving organize the panels, which are purposely held outside of the courthouse at the County Highway Department.

Victim impact panels are active in many other counties around the state, including Barron, Brown, Door, Jefferson, Kenosha, Kewaunee, La Crosse, Marinette, Marquette, Monroe, Oneida, Sauk, and Waukesha.

Those looking for assistance in starting a victim impact panel might order a copy of Victim Impact Panels: A Reference Manual, which was published by the University of Wisconsin Law School Resource Center on Impaired Driving in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. To request a copy, contact the resource center at (800) 862-1048.

Winnebago Conflict Resolution Center Trains New Mediators

The Winnebago Conflict Resolution Center, Inc. (WCRC) held its annual Mediator Training in March. The sessions lasted for five days with emphasis on ethics and standards of practice, mediator styles, skills, strategies, simulation of disputes, and case management procedures. Besides volunteers, the audience included business people, such as attorneys and others whose professions involve dealing with conflict. After the sessions, participants were invited to co-mediate with experienced mediators. Volunteers must complete a total of eight hours of co-mediating with experienced mediators as well as eight hours of observation in addition to the five-day training session, according to Kristy Bradish, executive director of WCRC. After completion of the training requirements, the volunteers then commit a minimum of five hours a month for one year to WCRC.

The group's 50 volunteers currently handle more than 400 cases per year. The cases may involve small claims, divorces, children in need of protection and/or services (CHIPS), neighborhood/community disputes, and more. WCRC volunteers have assisted thousands of disputants in resolving their complaints out of court, with a 90 percent settlement rate.

For more information on the mediator program, contact Bradish at (920) 236-4711 or Winnebago Conflict Resolution Center, Winnebago County Courthouse, 415 Jackson Street, P.O. Box 2808, Oshkosh, WI 54903-2808. The next training is scheduled for March 17-22, 2003.